The

# Non-Subscribing Presbyterian

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## Notes of the Month.

We fervently hope that this month of May, 1919, will be memorable in the history of mankind as the month which marked the inauguration of a long period of peace. It is six months ago since, in November, 1918, the Armistice was signed and hostilities ceased. Now, we trust, these events are speedily to find their fitting sequel in the culmination of the work of the Paris Peace Conference in the formal ratification of peace terms. If at times the period of international deliberations has seemed long we needed only to remind ourselves that no body of representatives was ever entrusted with a more responsible task than that which has fallen to the plenipotentaries of the nations. Not only had they to garner the results of victory, but they had also to pave the way for the possibilities of permanent peace. As we write, we note with profound satisfaction the fact that the League of Nations has received the formal assent of the Great Powers. Thereby much has been accomplished. Hitherto, as Dr. Jacks pointed out in a striking article in "The Hibbert Journal," all the nations have been organised on a basis of war, and necessarily were determined in their outlook and activities, by the possibility of war sooner or later. Thus, great and ever-increasing armaments seemed essential, and competitive schemes of national preparedness the chief desideratum. To visualise, and prepare for, a future where all this would be changed, and the possibilities of war might become negligible, if not quite eliminated, was a tremendous undertaking, demanding gifts of insight and constructive statesmanship. Hence we need not cavil at details which time may modify. The outstanding fact remains, that the shock of the great world-wide war has so touched the conscience of mankind that the nations are ready to undertake the great experiment. We trust that it may realise the fondest hopes of its projectors, and inaugurate a new era in the peaceful progress of humanity.

* *

A year ago we were compelled to forego the holding of the Sunday School Conference, as war-time difficulties were found insuperable by our friends at Larne, whose invitation had been given and cordially accepted at the Templepatrick Conference of 1917. Now, however, the postponed event is to be undertaken by our Larne congregation, and with pleasant recollections

in our mind of our last visit on a similar occasion, we look forward to a very enjoyable and successful Conference next month. Although the war is over, and peace will speedily be signed, pre-war travelling facilities do not seem as yet possible. Despite this fact, we trust there will be good attendance. It is a sign of the times that the ladies who do such splendid work within our congregations are to supply the reader of the paper, in the person of Mrs. J. G. Davies, of Banbridge. We need say no more to arouse the anticipations of our readers, and all who are interested in the work of our Sunday Schools.

* *

Not a few friends in the North of Ireland will be interested in the fact that the Rev. Herbert Barnes, now Minister of Oldham Road Church, Manchester, has accepted an invitation to become minister of the Church of the Divine Unity, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. That in itself is a testimony to his ministerial work, and justifies the confidence which his North of Ireland friends had in his earnestness and ability. We all the more gladly call attention to his appointment, because we desire to see more of our young men reared within the bounds of the Non-Subscribing Church giving themselves to the Ministry of our Free Churches. The latter may not have, from a worldly point of view, much to offer in the matter of remuneration. Nevertheless, it still offers to the self-sacrificing and earnest-hearted, golden opportunities of service for God and man.

* *

As Dr. Mellone has very kindly accepted the invitation of the General Purpose Committee of our Non-Subscribing Church to deliver the Annual Lecture at the meetings in June, all who valued his work here, and have followed with deep sympathy his successful labours elsewhere, will be glad to hear him again in our Church assemblies. The gatherings of a year ago were responsible for good attendances, and there should be no falling-off on this occasion.

## A Thought for the Month

### "PEACE WITHIN AND WITHOUT."

"Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body"
—COLOSSIANS iii. 15.

"There are several things called peace which are by no means divine or God-like peace. There is peace, for example, in the man who lives for and enjoys himself, with no nobler aspiration goading him on to make him feel the rest of God; that is peace, but that is merely the peace of toil. There is rest on the surface of the caverned lake, which no wind can stir; but that is the peace of stagnation. There is peace among the stones which have fallen and rolled down the mountain's side, and lie there quietly at rest; but that is the peace of inanity. There is peace in the hearts of enemies who lie together, side by side, in the same trench of the battlefield, the animosities of their souls silenced at length, and their hands no longer clenched in deadly enmity against each other; but that is the peace of death. If our peace be but the peace of the sensualist satisfying pleasure; if it be but the peace of mental torpor and inaction, the peace of apathy, or the peace of the soul dead in trespasses and sins, we may whisper to ourselves, 'Peace, peace' but there will be no peace; there is not the peace of unity nor the peace of God, for the peace of God is the living peace of love.

"The next thing we observe respecting this peace is, that it is the manifestation of power—it is the peace which comes from an inward power: "Let the peace of God,' says the Apostle, 'rule within your hearts." For it is a power, the manifestation of strength. There is no peace except there is the possibility of the opposite of peace, although now restrained and controlled. You do not speak of the peace of a grain of sand, because it cannot be otherwise than merely insignificant, and at rest. You do not speak of the peace of a mere pond; you speak of the peace

of the sea, because there is the opposite of peace implied, there is power and strength. And this, brethren, is the real character of the peace in the mind and soul of man. Oh! we make a great mistake when we say there is strength in passion, in the exhibition of emotion. Passion and emotion, and all those outward manifestations, prove, not strength, but weakness. If the passions of a man are strong, it proves the man himself is weak; if he cannot restrain or control his passions. The real strength and majesty of the soul of man is calmness, the manifestation of strength; the peace of God ruling; the word of Christ saying to the inward storms, 'Peace!', and there is 'a great calm.'"—F.W. ROBERTSON, of Brighton.

## THE FRINGE.

In any public movement, there are those more or less acquainted with the principles which the movement represents, who read, who attend lectures, and form the audiences at the meetings; and then there are those outside to whom these talk about what is being said and done; their ideas are more vague, but this fringe forms the field from which new recruits will be drawn. This is markedly the case in politics. The strong politicianis keeenly alert to what the newspapers are reporting in his particular line. the latest utterance of his leader, or of his leader's opponent, the way in which election pledges are being fulfilled or neglected. Whenever a political meeting is to be held in his neighbourhood he is there. Most probably many of his evenings will be spent at his political club. In the train, on the tram, he will be ready with his opinion on the latest phase. By temperament he is a politician. There is a theory that human beings, by their temperaments, are upon various rays. He is on the ray of power, others on that of devotion, others on music, and art, and so on, each equally strong on his special line. The politician always finds a little audience of his own, whose sympathies he gets more or less, though they are not so clear in their minds about details; but this large ring of less informed opinion is just what turns an election, either one way or the other.

Round every religious denomination there must be such a ring. Perhaps the denomination itself may be a small body, somewhat resembling the planet Saturn, but its rings may be very broad.

People passing one of our churches must give even a little thought as to what it is we stand for, and form some opinion, perhaps a very distorted one, about our teaching. The Unitarian Church in Glasgow, to some of the "unco guid" is the "Devil's cucumber-frame," that is because the light comes through the roof, and perhaps elsewhere to some people our churches might be "synagogues of Satan." They are astonished when they discover that the Bible we read from is just their Bible; that we sing such hymns as "In the Cross of Christ I Glory," and "Nearer my God to Thee," and that these could have been written by Unitarians, and they cannot understand it. The old order is passing, the War was its climax. Everywhere there is talk of re-construction, making ready to meet the new conditions. The great need of Christianity, as a whole, it is being said, "is that it shall be permeated by the spirit of inquiry." Unitarians have for long insisted on the foundation principle of Protestantism, "the right of private judgment," the duty to think for yourself.

This teaching may have even been carried to an extreme, and another factor lost sight of, which the unquestioning devotee has managed to keep hold of, though it might rightly be the possession of the religious free-thinker as well, and that is that "deep calleth unto deep," that the intuition reaches where the mind is powerless to go further.

That the soul lives on; that the soul of Jesus still lives on; that in some way, not to be defined, but none the less real, the living Christ still stands within the veil, guarding His Church. Still

is He, the Head and Chief Shepherd. He is not God, but He is Christ. The Father is greater than He. None the less the Church is His, and He has not left it. There is a great difference in the conception of a Church, set going two thousand years ago, and then left to struggle on as best it could, and a Church which is being guided to become a more and more perfect channel between Him and the outer world. That is the factor which is certainly not wanting, but is not whole-heartedly enough accepted, and thus the channel for the life is not open enough. The "Fringe" needs to be more assured of this, for it is personal touch with the Master that is craved, and were we more awake to this, the work as a whole would assume an entirely new aspect, and our methods would be changed, so far as the inner motive was concerned, for instead of thinking what we could do ourselves, we would strain to catch the Divine intention and carry that out, as a regiment carries out the command of its officer. This is not the conception of Christ which finds acceptance in the orthodox Churches, nor is it one familiar among the bulk of Unitarian Churches. A Christ, "the first-born among many brethren," Son of Man, Son of God, a child of humanity who has risen into Divinity, fulfilling His promises, such, the writer believes, have we at the head of the Christian Church to-day, and that He is reconstructing His Church for the new world into which we are emerging.

ULLIN.

## A Book for the Month.

### "FAITH AND FREEDOM."

A couple of years ago there appeared a searching little book entitled "Faith or Fear," by five members of the Church of England. It was an appeal to that Church to meet the new situation in a new spirit. It was almost entirely critical; the faults of the Church of England were laid bare (faults common to practically all Churches in our day), and the Church was called upon to repent, to change her whole mind, her whole outlook upon life, that she might rise to the most glorious opportunity ever given to her. But the editor recognised that while criticism was necessary, it was not sufficient, so he now gives us another volume entitled "Faith and Freedom," the aim of which is constructive. Some of the contributors are the same in both books, but Donald Hankey, author of "A Student in Arms," who contributed largely to "Faith or Fear?" was killed in action soon after that book was published, and in his place we have an interesting and provocative essay by Mr. A. Clutton-Brock.

Although, like its predecessor, addressed to the Church of England, "Faith and Freedom" should be of interest to us, as the writers seek to be constructive in an atmosphere of freedom. The book is frankly theological, which is a good thing in view of the widespread tendency to seek escape from perplexities by increased activities in the realm of social service. True enough, we want a practical religion, in touch with all the affairs of life; but unless that religion has a solid foundation of reasoned theology, it is in danger of degenerating into fanaticism and sentimentality. Theology is not popular now-a-days, but we cannot hope to revive the life of the Churches unless we make God and Immortality realities, and we cannot make them realities unless we re-establish the conviction that belief in them is altogether rational, and does not involve the denial of any truth revealed to us by advancing science.

The essay on the conception of God is a helpful contribution to the needful task of re-thinking our thought of God. It is profound without being too technical; it is rational without being uninspiring. The tendency of the whole book is indicated by the emphasis laid on the incarnation as compared with the atonement. The indwelling God in Jesus, and in all men, is the fact to be laid stress on at the present time. With regard to the creeds, it is pointed

out, (1) The statements of the creeds are themselves a development of the earlier faith of the Gospels, and it is merely arbitrary to allow this movement of thought up to the time when the latest creed was compiled, and then come to a full stop. (2) We have to remember (what is indeed a commonplace among the theologians) that the statements of the creeds were designed less to define the truth exhaustively than to rule out certain errors and false opinions in the age in which they were compiled. (3) The creeds mean different things to different men. In the essay on "The Holy Spirit," the writer says:—"She (the Church) must dare to be free, to test all things by their conformity with the Spirit of Holiness, and by no smaller standards, to make the imitation of Christ the only orthodoxy, to show herself large enough, and loving enough, to claim for the service of her Lord all men of goodwill, and to think upon, and seek after, whatsoever things are true, and honest, and pure, and lovely, and of good report." And again, in the last essay, "We may indeed paraphrase the old maxim, 'Extra Ecclesiam nulla sallus,' by saying that where men are finding salvation they cannot be outside the Church." In this spirit it is sought to construct a theology which will be up to date, and the result is often thought-provoking and suggestive. Here and there the authors prove unable to trust the freedom they advocate, as for example, when, while admitting that the evidence for the virgin birth is conflicting and unconvincing, one writer still says of the creeds, "We have no hesitation in repeating them because we are honestly convinced that we have a firm hold upon the truth which they were intended to guard." Why not express the truth in terms which do not invite disbelief?

Coming from the quarter it does, this book is a welcome tribute to the principles of Non-Subscription. It will be found helpful to many who have no time or inclination for larger and more technical theological works. It is good, but we cannot help wishing there had been just a little more faith and a little more freedom.

## SOCIAL SERVICE NOTES.

[The Editor has courteously placed the space under this heading at the disposal of the N.S.P.C.I. Union for Social Service, and the Union will supply material for it regularly every month.]

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Co-Partnership in Housing.—By way of continuation of the admirable lecture by Mr. Alex. Wilson, reported in the last issue of this magazine, the Committee of the Union for Social Service arranged for a lecture by Capt. J. W. Storey on "Co-partnership in Housing." The lecture was delivered on Wednesday, 16th April, at 8 p.m., in the Central (Minor) Hall, Belfast, under the chairmanship of Rev. H. J. Rossington, and, as is usually the case when members of our Church are invited to consider subjects of first-rate practical importance, there was a very small attendance. Captain Storey impressed those present with his admirable presentation of a somewhat involved subject. In the course of his remarks he showed the great possibilities of a Public Utility Society, or Co-partnership Tenants' Society, of which there are at present fourteen in active operation in England. Having demonstrated the practical impossibility of private enterprise meeting present-day housing difficulties, and pointing out that there was little likelihood of municipal housing, especially in Belfast, doing very much to meet the urgent need, he advocated the formation of Public Utility Societies. That the Government fully recognised the value of these co-partnership schemes was evident from the fact that it was prepared to afford them similar facilities in the way of subsidies to those offered to municipalities. The lecturer then gave most interesting details to show the great success of co-operative movements in certain suburban districts of London, Liverpool, and Birmingham. The substantial benefits to be derived by the industrial classes especially from such co-operation were very clearly defined. Shareholders could come in at so low a figure as £1, and any profit accruing from the rent paid by the tenants went towards the eventual purchase of the house.

A brief discussion followed, in which it was pointed out and admitted by the lecturer, that any such movement must have the support of the Corporation in the way of affording cheap transport facilities.

THE CHRISTIAN SOCIAL CRUSADE.—That most public-spirited of men, Dr. Gore, who is resigning the Bishopric of Oxford in order to be freer to devote himself to general social work, has just uttered some memorable remarks upon the duty of the Churches in a pamphlet about the League of Nations. Having stressed the fact that ultimately the success of the League of Nations depends on the wealth of Christian spirit in the world, he goes on to say: "For the purpose of promoting the League of Nations, Christendom, even a divided Christendom, can already act as if it were, what in its central being it still is, one body. I have long been persuaded that the best immediate way of promoting religious unity in our own country is for all the fragments of the Christian Church to act together as if they were one, on the moral and social questions of the day. Let us join to attack the questions of housing, wages, fellowship of employers and employed, commercial and sexual morality, and temperance, so far as these questions affect public policy."

That the Bishop means what he says is proved by the recent formation of a committee, consisting of representatives of all denominations, to consider the ways and means of an Inter-denominational Christian Social Crusade. This committee was formed as the result of a conference called by the Bishop of Oxford, and which met in a room in the House of Lords at the beginning of the year, and most significant of its broad spirit, one of its twelve members is the Rev. H. H. Johnson, Secretary of the National Conference Union for Social Science, which is drawn from members of those English Churches of the same theological complexion as ours.

Here is a lesson for Ireland. More and more it becomes evident that no real social work can be done here until the Churches have laid aside, if only for the purpose of social work, their theological differences. If it is too much to hope that Roman Catholics and Protestants can at once lay aside their differences, yet surely a beginning should be made within the limit of the various Churches constituting Irish Protestantism.

THE UNION FOR SOCIAL SERVICE.—More members and increased funds are urgently needed if our Union is to carry on its work fruitfully. It may be of interest to know that already the Union has done a small piece of useful social work by forming a Girls' Club of girls from the half-time school in Pilot Place, Belfast, with the hall of our York Street Church as meeting place.

## ULSTER UNITARIAN CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION.

### ANNUAL MEETING.

The annual meeting in connection with the Ulster Unitarian Christian Association was held on April 7th in the Central Hall, Rosemary Street. On the previous day the annual sermons were preached in the First Presbyterian Church by Rev. Alfred Hall, M.A., B.D., of Sheffield.

At the meeting the Rev. J. A. Kelly occupied the chair.

Rev. George Slipper, in giving the annual report, stated that the work of disseminating the views of the organisation had been maintained. War conditions had prevailed for the greater part of the year, and this fact was responsible for the paucity of activity along new lines. But, notwithstanding, there had been a steady call for literature, and the number of inquirers remained on a level with previous years. The Depository, under the capable management of Mr. E. Gordon, had been kept up to date. The Committee were grateful to the subscribers for their continued help in the maintenance of the Association. With larger means at their disposal it would be possible to undertake a more comprehensive programme of work in the future, and new

subscribers were solicited. With profound regret they recorded the deaths of two members of the Committee—Mr. Robert M'Giffin and Mr. William M'Ninch, both of whom had rendered loyal and devoted service for long periods. Other valuable friends of the Association who had passed away were—Miss Isabella Riddel, always a generous friend and supporter of the organisation; Mr. Stanley Bell, Banbridge; Miss S. Roberts, Dunmurry; Mr. Henry M'Roberts, Rademon, who had been a devoted friend of the Association, and a local treasurer for many years; and, quite recently, Mr. W. H. M'Fadden, who had served on the Committee for a lengthened period.

Mr. C. J. M'Kisack presented the financial statement, which showed that the year had concluded with a balance to the credit of the Association, and a number of subscriptions were still due, which it was believed would be sent in later. While some old subscribers had fallen away, the Committee were encouraged by others coming forward.

The Chairman moved the adoption of the report and financial statement. He said they were thankful that the war, which had raged for four years and a half, was now at an end, and they hoped the peace about to be concluded might never be broken again. There were times of activity and times for rest, and he thought that the period of a great war was not the time when they should launch forth on what might be called enthusiastic activity. His impression was that people were not willing in these days to sit down and study theological problems. A great many of them wanted a religion which was not to be expressed by the usual formulas. He had come into contact with a great many soldiers, and he found that what they looked for was the criterion of good Christian life. One of them when asked what was the religion of the tranches, replied that it was "helping one another." That was the right idea. If they did not help one another they were not worthy of their great Leader, whom they set forth very prominently in those rooms. He meant Jesus Christ. Their Association put forward the sufficiency of the Scriptures as a rule of faith, the sole deity of God the Father, liberty of thought, and the importance of a true education. As to the future, their hope was to bring out their relation to Him Who of all had walked upon earth was the greatest and the best. There was a great distinction between Christ Jesus and every other teacher. They could not understand His message without reference to His person and His life. If the principles of their Association were more widely known and practised, they would have more brotherhood among men and more simplicity in their teaching.

Mr. Hugh Erskine seconded the adoption of the reports, which were passed.

Mr. C. J. M'Kisack moved, and Mr. Greenfield seconded, a resolution expressing a welcome to Belfast to the Rev. Alfred Hall, and returning warm thanks to him for his able and impressive sermons preached in aid of the Association.

The resolution was passed with acclamation.

Rev. Mr. Hall, in replying to the vote of thanks, said it seemed to him that their Association had solved the difficulties which they experienced in England. They wanted in England exactly the same position defined—that as churches and members and people they were perfectly free. As a body, however, while they had certain opinions, he held they had a right to band themselves together in an Association. He was glad to see they had used in the name of their organisation the word Unitarian. Some people objected to it, but it made clear what they stood for. Proceeding, Rev. Mr. Hall gave an interesting address, in which he said the world would be floundering in agnosticism and atheism if they did not realise the necessity of making plain and clear the great and simple principles of religion. They must stand for the liberty of the individual to develop his own religious life by coming into touch with God and Father of all men.

Rev. H. J. Rossington, M.A., moved, and Mr. Harold Thomas seconded, "That this meeting renews its adhesion to the principles and objects of the Association as set forth in the rules," and this being passed,

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks to the Chairman.

## Memorial Notices.

EGMONT A. PRAEGAR.

It is with profound regret that we record the death of Mr. Egmont A. Praegar, of Cultra, Co. Down, which occurred suddenly in London on March 30th. Mr. Praegar had all his life been connected with our Holywood congregation, and was latterly a member of the Church Committee. Although over military age, and at first rejected by the medical officers, he persisted in his efforts to bear his part in the great war, and at last obtained a commission in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve. For months he roughed it uncomplainingly and cheerfully on the North Sea, and it is beyond doubt that the severe strain found the weak spot in his constitution, and brought on the disease which caused his death. To his great disappointment he was invalided out of service. He never recovered his health. He went to London to undergo treatment, which seemed to have been beneficial, then with startling suddenness the end came. Egmont Praegar was an enthusiastic yachtsman, a great walker, a lover of nature, and a lover of good literature. He had wide sympathies, and a most kindly disposition. He was a man of peace, but he would not stand aside while others fought and died. He sacrificed his health and hastened his death for his country and the righteous cause. He ever took a keen interest in the affairs of our Church, and did splendid work in connection with the Holywood Working Men's Club, of which he was a trustee. His memory will be long cherished by a wide circle of friends, and we respectfully tender to his mother and other members of the family our deepest sympathy. The funeral took place at Holywood after a short service in the church. Both at the church and at the graveside the Rev. G. L. Phelps officiated.

## LESSON NOTES FOR TEACHERS.

[To be used in accordance with the Scheme of Instruction for 1919, issued by the Sunday School Committee of the N.S.P.C.I.]

*May 4.* *The Draw Net (the inclusiveness of the kingdom).* Read Matthew xiii. 47–50. Key text, Matt. xiii. 47.

1. *The Parable.* Jesus is here describing a scene which he frequently witnessed by the Sea of Gallilee. He has seen the fishermen row out in their boats, in which lie the great brown nets, and when they have rowed far enough out drop the nets into the sea. The action of the draw net is thus described: "Its depth is comparatively small, but its length is great One side is kept close to the bottom by weights, and the other side is drawn towards the surface by corks or bladders. Thus, when spread, it stands erect like a wall in the water, enclosing a large space. As soon as it has been spread, the fishermen begin to draw it at both ends slowly and steadily towards the land. As the enclosed semi-circle gradually diminishes the captured fishes, having still room for motion, retire before the advancing prison wall until they are at length confined within a very narrow space, and then drawn into the shallow water. There is then a violent flutter for a few moments, and the whole are laid helpless on the sand."

The purpose of the draw net is not to let any of the good fish escape, and the only way to accomplish this is to take up all the fish at any particular spot, good or bad. If you refuse to catch the bad fish, then you will fail to catch most of the good fish. One might land a few good fish with lines or small nets, but very few compared with the thousands caught by a draw net. So the fishermen just take up all the fish together, good and bad, and when they have got the catch to shore

they begin to separate the good from the bad, not before. The lessons to be drawn from this parable are two.

2. *Lesson No.* 1.—*The inclusiveness of the kingdom.* God wants all sorts and conditions of people in his kingdom, not one particular class, or sect, or race. We are all His children, and therefore we are all in the draw net, and we, with our limited understandings, do not know who are the really good and who the bad. We are in the position of the fishes, and just as a disagreeable dog-fish might abuse the herring as having no right to bump up against him in the net, when all the while it is the herring that is wanted, so many folk who give themselves airs as being the only sort of folk God wants may be the very sort who will be rejected. It is not for us to condemn; God alone knows. Therefore the first lesson to learn is "Judge not, that ye be not judged." Do not be too ready to find fault with those who differ from you. They may be right, you may be wrong.

3. *Lesson No.* 2. *The separation.* God wants all, and therefore He allows us all a chance, and demands that we shall give everybody a chance. But even though we cannot divide men up into good and bad, God can, because He knows all. Like the fish in the net, we cannot avoid the final separation. We may, perhaps, be disposed to think that, because bad men get on as well as, if not better, than good men, therefore it does not matter whether we are good or bad. But it matters more than anything else in the world. For only the good man will be chosen for the eternal kingdom. Also, as Mr. Hirst puts it in his "Half-hours with the Parables," God's angels separate us here and now, and he names the following angels:—1. *Pain,* which follows on the violation of the laws of health. 2. *Incompetence,* which follow on neglecting our opportunities. 3. *Pangs of conscience,* which follow on disobedience to the Divine will.

*May* 11. REVIEW.

*May* 18th. *The Mustard Seed and Leaven (the growth of the kingdom).* Matthew xiii. 31–33. Key text,, Philip. ii. 5.

1 *The Mustard Seed.* Most of us must have seen the very tiny mustard seeds, but few of us realise how big a plant the mustard plant can become in certain countries if allowed to grow its full size. It never actually becomes a tree, but it grows into a big bush 8 to 12 feet high and small birds can find shelter in its branches. That surely is a great result from very small beginnings.

2. *The meaning.* Never despise small beginnings. Even the greatest thing was once exceedingly small. If a thing has life it is bound to grow. Jesus apparently had every reason to despair because he had only a few followers. But he had confidence in the spirit of the kingdom, so he could confidently say, "Never mind about its smallness. It will grow." Every storm of rain begins with a tiny cloud; every dawn with a speck of light. So also, William Lloyd Garrison began the great anti-slavery movement in 1832 with only about a dozen followers; yet in thirty years the objects he aimed at were attained. So with the kingdom. In every case it begins with the seed of goodness in each man's heart, but it will end with the whole world being saved. No one is too small or weak to do his share for the kingdom. Every child is a grain or seed, and if only they keep their hearts open to God, they will grow in constant usefulness.

3. *The Leaven.* How wonderfully light and spongy is the loaf of bread we get from the baker, and nothing in it practically but flour and water. Yet try mixing flour and water alone, and baking it, and the result is a hard, heavy, unpleasant lump. What makes the flour and water into a delicious loaf is the addition of a little leaven, which sets to work, and whilst the dough stands aside for a while, gradually makes its presence felt in every part of the bread until the whole rises up and only needs baking to be a light, delicious loaf.

4. *The meaning.* Just a question first. What do we all really want? Surely to be truly happy, and to live happily together. But how foolishly

some folk set about accomplishing that. They think that if they will mix up fine houses, big industries, great luxuries, rich clothes, and such like things, they will get this beautiful and happy life. Not a bit; all they get often is lumpy, unpleasant life, full of quarrels and bad feeling. It is just like trying to make a cake by putting in all the richest and most expensive things we know, and the result is terrible. But if instead of troubling about adding to our riches, ornamenting our clothes, stuffing our bodies, and so on, we first of all made sure of mixing in a little leaven with what we have at hand, the result would be happiness, hopefulness, and joy.

This leaven is "the mind of Christ" (see key text), the love of goodness. The simplest act of kindness, mercy and helpfulness, will do more to make us and those about us happy than all the wealth of the world without this leaven. If we leaven our whole lives, we shall also leaven other people's lives. *e.g.*, Dr. Guthrie was called the "Apostle of the Ragged School Movement" because he did so much to get schools opened everywhere for poor boys and girls. He himself says he was inspired to do this vast work through hearing of John Pounds of Portsmouth, who used to teach the ragged children in his little cobbler's shop. John Pounds was the leaven of Dr. Guthrie's work. Teachers might read Browning's poem, "Pippa Passes," and simplify it according to their scholars' years.

*May 25. The unmerciful servant (the law of the kingdom).* Read Matthew xviii. 21–35. Key text, Matt. xviii. 35.

*Introduction.*—No kingdom could long continue without a system of laws, and the kingdom of heaven is no exception to this rule. In the parable of the unmerciful servant we have one of the most fundamental laws strikingly expressed, the law of forgiveness.

1. *The Parable.* The ordinary law of the world, unfortunately, is not forgiveness. Hence, when the servant found he could not possibly pay his debt to his lord, he expected to be severely punished. He might have expected his lord not to be too exacting if he had only owed him a trifling sum. Thus, Peter suggested to Jesus that a *little* forgiveness was as much as one had a right to expect—until seven times. But the lord in the story showed that his forgivenness was most generous—until seventy times seven. There was, however, a limit to his forgiveness. When that servant, who had been forgiven a debt of a thousand talents, refused to forgive a fellow-servant one hundred pence, then his lord revoked his own forgiveness, and punished him to the utmost limit. He would not forgive a man who refused to forgive others.

2. *The meaning of forgiveness.* Forgiveness does not mean letting people do wrong and taking no notice of it. That only does them and others harm. Forgiveness means *helping* others. God forgives because He loves us and wants to help us to be children worthy of His love. When a man has done wrong, the thing is to try to help him to do better in future. If, say, one man does another an injury, he should first of all be made to feel sorry. He will not feel sorry if the man he has injured does him an injury in return. He will feel angry, and perhaps return the injury. But if the injured man should bear the injury bravely, then the wrongdoer is more likely to feel repentance. So soon as he repents he should be forgiven, and then the way is open for a better and happier life. We are always doing wrong to God by disobeying His will, abusing the life and abilities He gives us in selfish and impure deeds. Then God's aim is to make us feel really sorry. He adopts various means, according to the person concerned. Sometimes hardship is needed, sometimes additional blessings are more effective. But so soon as we really repent then God forgives.

3. *The operation of forgiveness.* The reason why forgiveness is a law of the kingdom is that it is a mark of God-likeness. God forgives, and therefore we must forgive (key text) in order to deserve His forgiveness, and our forgiveness must be unstinted. We should be very unfortunately placed if God

were to limit His forgiveness to us. We are always doing wrong, and always needing Divine mercy. Our debt to God is, so to speak, one thousand talents. It would not help us much if God were to forgive us say 10 or 100 talents, and then insist in punishment for the remainder. Therefore, the generosity he extends to us we must extend to others. Compared with our debt to God, theirs to us is a miserable hundred pence. Nor shall we find forgiveness so hard as we imagine, if only we will make a start. We shall be surprised at the way it alters and improves everything. So many of our injuries are due to ignorant misunderstanding, which a little forgiveness will clear up in a moment.—E. H. P.

## Reports.

**Antrim.**—A very successful whist drive, followed by a short dance, was given recently by Rev. George Vance and Mrs. Crook, in the Protestant Hall, Antrim. Owing largely to the great kindness of Mr. Kirk, J.P., and Mr. and Mrs. Norman Kirk, and the ladies of Antrim, it was one of the most enjoyable and satisfactory gatherings held in recent years. There were about one hundred persons present. The Massereene Band provided the music, which added greatly to the enjoyment of the evening. The prize winners were:—Ladies—First, Miss Woods, G.P.O., Belfast; second, Miss Isabel Adams, The Manse, Antrim; third, Miss Gilmour Crumlin. Gentlemen—First, Mr. M'Craith, Antrim; second, Rev. S. E. Bowen, The Manse, Crumlin; third, Lieut. Divine, N.I.H., Antrim. The proceeds, which were in aid of the forthcoming N S. Presbyterian Bazaar, to be held on 30th and 31st May, realised a net a net profit of £31.

The congregation in Antrim are making a great effort to wipe off the remaining debt on their Manse, and we are contemplating holding a Bazaar in the Protestant Hall, Antrim, on May 30th and 31st. We hope that all the friends from the adjoining congregations will do their best to be present and by their sympathy and support, encourage our Antrim congregation in its aeduous and worthy object.

* *

**Ballyhemlin.**—A very successful Concert and Entertainment was held at Ballyhemlin, on Wednesday evening, April 9th. Mr. William Armstrong, of Belfast, very kindly secured the gratuitous services of several professional friends—Mr. Howe (tenor), Mr. Belshaw (elocutionist), Mr. Fawcett (humourist), and Miss M'Mullen (a rising young soprano), and Miss Eileen Miller gave selections in dancing (Irish jig and hornpipe), Miss Violet Skillen, of Ballywalter (contralto), was very well received. Mr. and Mrs Evans gave accompaniments on the pianoforte.

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**Banbridge.**—On Friday evening March 28th, there assembled in the Dunbar Memorial Schools a goodly company to welcome back the soldiers who were connected with the congregation. The Young People's Guild, which had regularly supplied the soldiers with parcels, was responsible for the happy thought of giving a tangible token of thanks to the men who have been fortunate enough to return. The Rev. J. Glyn Davies gave the men a very hearty welcome back to their native town and church life. These men, he said, had voluntarily enlisted at an early period of the war in face of much discouragement; they had left comfortable homes and happy family ties, and nothing but the plain call of duty had made them go. All honour was due to them. Whilst happy in our re-union with these men, there was at the same time an undercurrent of sadness in our thoughts. We remembered those who would never return. In our Church we had lost but one, and in a short time we would honour his memory. The best thanks we could give to the men who had done the work for those who could not go, at a cost of great sacrifice, was to show by our lives that we were worth it.

Mrs. Glyn Davies was then called upon to present silver-mounted walking

sticks, with the initials of the recipients engraved thereon, to Lieutenant R. W. Glass, Air-Mechanic Shanks, Private Stevenson, and a Peterson pipe to Private Haire. Mrs. Davies thanked the men for having played their part as men. Coming from a land where every available man had been called upon, she was especially glad to be able to thank those Banbridge men who had helped to save the reputation of Ireland. They brought honour to their land and to their church.

Lieutenant R. W. Glass responded on behalf of the men. He thanked the Guild for the happy evening and their gifts. The parcels had always been eagerly looked forward to, and provided a helpful link between church life and their lives in the trenches. They would always look back with pleasure on that night, remembering the kindness of their own people.

A pre-war time tea was served by members of the Guild, and in the intervals of dancing and games, songs were rendered by Misses A. M'William, M. M'Carthy, Rev. J. G. Davies, and Mr. G. H. Simms.

A very happy evening was brought to a close by the singing of Auld Lang Syne and the National Anthem. Miss Dornan presided at the piano.

The Yearly Social Gathering of the congregation and friends of this church was held on Friday, the 4th April. There was a good attendance, and the proceedings were characterised by a happy spontaneity and general enjoyment was the result.

After tea, the Rev. J. Glyn Davies gave a welcome to all present. He then reviewed the work of the past year. In spite of the great amount of sickness which had prevailed, the attendance at the school and church had maintained its usual level. Mr. Davies paid a tribute to the untiring and faithful work of the teachers in the Sunday School. The choir was also thanked for their great services in the worship of the church. Under Miss Dornan's leadership they were a source of help and pleasure, and added to the joy of devotional exercises. During the past year the world had passed through one of the greatest crisis in history. The after-effects were not yet finished, and the outcome of it all had yet to be seen. It was possible that quarrels would arise over the conclusions of the Peace Conference; that another war would be started. It was hoped that Divine Providence would give our statesmen guidance and wisdom to avert such a calamity. In our gratitude for the cessation of hostilities, the men whose sacrifice and endurance had rendered the Armistice possible must not be forgotten. Nothing that we could do would be enough to venerate their memories.

The programme was then commenced The choir, with the help of Messrs. S. Adamson, J. Mooney, and G. Simms, and Rev. Mr. Davies rendered part-songs in a delightful manner. They were—"O, who will o'er the Downs so free" and "The Long Day Closes." The four parts were evenly balanced, and a delightful harmony was produced. Mr. Adamson gave "Beyond the Dawn" with beautiful expression; he afterwards further pleased the audience with "The Hills of Donegal" and "Mother Machree." Mr. J. Mooney was in great form, and sang "I'll Sing Thee Songs of Araby," "The Little Irish Girl," and "She is Far from the Land," in splendid style. Miss Helen Stevenson sang well "Back from the Land of Yesterday" and "When You Come Home." Miss A. M'Williams' beautiful voice was heard to great advantage in "The Little Damozel," "When I went a-Roamin," and she sang with great depth and feeling, "Watch with Me." Miss M'Williams also sang delightfully with Rev. Mr. Davies the duet, "Night of Stars." Quartettes were sung by Misses S. Shanks and Jardine and Mr. Jim M'Keown and Rev. Mr. Davies. The voices were well blended, and the effect was splendid. "The Meeting of the Waters" being especially good. The humour of the evening was provided by Lieutenant J. Simms, who caused hearty laughter and enjoyment by his

excellent singing of "M'Breen's Heifer," "Have you been to Drumcolligher," and "The Mountains of Mourne."

The Dramatic Society as usual gave the final touch to a splendid programme by their acting of "The Doctors' Patients." Each part was excellently played.

At the conclusion of the sketch votes of thanks were passed to all the helpers and to those who had provided such a rare musical treat. The singing of God Save the King brought the evening's entertainment to a close.

### Lieutenant R. W. Glass Appointed a Magistrate.

The Lord Lieutenant has appointed Mr. R. W. Glass, LL.B., to be a Resident Magistrate for County Mayo, in succession to the late Mr. Milling, who was so foully murdered at Westport on the 29th ult. He will be stationed at Ballina, and is taking up duty within the next few days.

The appointment is a recognition of Lieutenant Glass' war service, and is not due to the influence of any political party. His host of friends in Banbridge and all over the country are extremely gratified at his promotion, and though his departure from amongst us is to be regretted, he will carry with him the good wishes of everyone.

Our most popular townsman, his patriotic action in throwing up his practice as a solicitor, and enlisting as a private in the Pioneer Battalion of the Royal Irish Rifles at a time when recruits were badly needed, will not soon be forgotten. The battalion was in process of formation at the time, and he brought with him many others who were stirred to action by his example. He served with the Ulster Division through its glorious campaigns, being mentioned in despatches by Sir Douglas Haig, and was awarded the Medaille Militaire by the President of the French Republic for distinguished service in the field. For gallant services and devotion to duty he was subsequently promoted to commissioned rank in the Inniskilling Fusiliers. On his return from France last summer he was engaged as organiser for the West Down area during the last recruiting campaign.

Mr. Glass was a regular worshipper in our church at Banbridge, and a member of its committee. We wish him well in his new office, for which his legal and other attainments specially fit him, and look forward to his further preferment.

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**Belfast : First Church.**—The Annual Sunday School Party originally fixed for February, but postponed because of the strike, took place on March 19. Fortunately, the postponement did not militate against the success of the gathering, there being a large attendance, especially of young people. After tea was served, under the direction of Miss Laird, the chair was taken by the Minister (Rev. H. J. Rossington). In his remarks he pointed out that the war and its demand for the services of the older scholars had necessarily affected the attendance in the senior classes ; but with the coming of a period of peace, he confidently expected their numbers to increase, and in fact that was already occurring. He announced the early starting of a branch of the War Savings' Association, and hoped that the parents would give their children every encouragement to participate in its benefits. He deeply regretted that Miss F. M. M'Tear was still unable to continue her splendid work, and that a great bereavement accounted for the absence of Miss M'Calmont. A welcome was given to Miss Mary Hewitt as teacher of the infant class. A very full and greatly-appreciated programme of songs, dances, and recitations followed. During an interval the prizes gained during the year were distributed by the chairman and Mr. Robert M'Crum, Superintendent. Dancing by the elder scholars brought a most successful evening to a close.

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**Larne.**—The Sunday School and Band of Hope connected with the above enjoyed an excellent entertainment on Friday evening, 21st March. Mr. Frank Wright, the superintendent, with

characteristic thoughtfulness, provided a luxurious tea, the catering being done by Mr. Pullin, of the Larne Co-Operative Society. From 7 p.m. till nearly 8 o'clock the wants of the young folk were attended to by the lady teachers, viz., Misses Moore, Bailie, Beth M'Ninch, M'Kee, Bryans, Steele, and Crawford assisted by active and willing young lads, after which a nice programme was submitted by the Rev. J. Kennedy, viz.—Readings by the faithful friend of Sunday school and everything pertaining to the congregation, Mr. S. Magill, who, after a brief and fitting address, read two pieces, which were laughter provoking but instructive withal. Miss Rosa Canning in clear tones, and with correct musical inflections, contributed a selection illustrative of the American Civil War. Solos were given on the piano by Miss Madge Steele, "an old scholar," who also gave a vocal item with much grace and sweetness. But the great feature of the evening was the concerted music led by Mr. Ralph Hay on his sweet-toned and powerful American organ, assisted by Mr. Crooks (mandoline), Messrs. Gourley and Martin (violins). Mr. Magill having officially thanked the performers and all who had contributed to the success of the evening, congratulated Mr. Wright and his helpers on their good works. The meeting concluded with the appending of more names to the Band of Hope register. It may be said with all truthfulness that a happier meeting never was held in the old schoolroom.

* *

**Newry.**—A wedding of much interest took place on the 16th of April between Mr. Stanley M'Kinstry and Miss Edna Slipper, daughter of our genial minister, in the presence of a large congregation in the Unitarian Church, Newry. Both are well known and highly esteemed in the Newry District, the bridegroom being identified with the linen industry, and the bride an extremely popular young lady, whose bright and winsome nature has won for her a large circle of friends. The wedding ceremony took place at 11 o'clock. The church was packed to its utmost capacity. During the singing of "O Love Divine," the bride entered the church on the arm of her father. She carried a beautiful white bouquet, and looked charming in ivory satin draped with white georgette embroidered with silver thread. She wore her mother's wedding veil of old ivory net, draped and caught with a wreath of orange blossoms. The marriage was solemnised by the Rev. A. Gordon, assisted by the Rev. Wm. M'Kinstry, brother of the bridegroom, and the Rev. G. J. Slipper. A reception was held in the Minor Town Hall, and was a most pleasant social function. In the afternoon Mr. and Mrs. Stanley M'Kinstry travelled to Dublin en route for the south of Ireland, where they spent their honeymoon.

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**Unity Guild.**—The Thirteenth Annual Meeting of the Guild was held in Rosemary Hall, on Wednesday evening, the 9th April, the President, Mr. H. B. Hunter, being in the chair. The attendance, although about the average for an annual meeting, represented less than one-third of the membership. The Secretary and Treasurer presented very satisfactory reports of the year's working, and showed that the membership for the past year was a record one, and that the average attendance at the meetings had been good. It was also gratifying to learn that the Treasurer still has a balance in hand, and this after contributing ten guineas to the Capital Account of the Sustentation Fund of the N.S.P.C.I., and one guinea to the N.S.P.C.I. Union for Social Service. There was also £1 6s. 3d. given to the Belfast Hospital for Sick Children, Queen Street, being amount of collection taken at annual service. After the reports had been moved and adopted, the Rev. M. Watkins was unanimously elected President for the ensuing year. Mr. G. Hill and Mr. E. R. Jackson were re-elected Hon. Treasurer and Hon. Auditor. Miss Montgomery was elected Hon. Secretary. The first meeting of this season will take place on Saturday, the 24th May, to Helen's Tower. The Annual Service will be

held in "All Souls'" Church on Sunday, 25th May, at 3-30 p.m., when the President will conduct the service. Surely it is not too much to expect that every member of the Guild should make a special effort to attend this service?

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MARRIAGE.

M'KINSTRY—SLIPPER—April 16th, at the First Presbyterian (Unitarian) Church, Newry, by Rev. A. Gordon, M.A., assisted by Rev. W. M'Kinstry, B.A., brother of bridegroom, and Rev. G. J. Slipper, father of the bride, Stanley, fourth son of the late Robert M'Kinstry, Bessbrook, and Mrs. M'Kinstry, 16 Rugby Road, Belfast, to Lucy Edna, only daughter of Rev. G. J. and Mrs. Silpper, Newry.

DEATH.

M'BRIDE—Ballymoney—At Dunaverney, on 11th April, James M'Bride, aged 50. Buried in the New Cemetery on 14th April.

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